

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
SPRING 2011

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 333 L20
RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

INSTRUCTOR: Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE TIME AND DAYS: TR 2:00-4:45pm
OFFICE: SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS: TR 1:00-1:45pm
TELEPHONE: (403) 220-3285 or (403) 220-5886 (main office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS: awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE ADDRESS: Blackboard

REQUIRED TEXT: Chidester, David. *Patterns of Transcendence: Religion Death, and Dying.*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Airies, Philippe.	<i>The Hour of our Death</i>
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Bailey, Lloyd R.	<i>Biblical Perspectives on Death</i>
Coward, Harold.	<i>Life After Death in World Religions</i>
Johnson, Christopher, ed.	<i>How Different Religions View Death and Afterlife</i>
Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth.	<i>On Death and Dying</i>
Kea, Michael C.	<i>Endings: A Sociology of Death and Dying</i>
Lewis, James R., ed.	<i>Encyclopedia of Afterlife Beliefs and Phenomena</i>
Obayashi, Hiroshi, ed.	<i>Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions</i>
Reynolds, Frank E. et al. eds.	<i>Religious Encounters with Death: Insights from the History and Anthropology of Religions.</i>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will study the issues surrounding the finality of death and the hope of an afterlife as expressed within diverse religious traditions throughout the ages. These studies will take us from the cosmological (religious world view) belief systems of primitive man, through to modern religious thought expressed within secular society. The religions studied will provide perspectives within historical and cultural contexts in order for the student to gain a working knowledge of the complexity and sophistication that has evolved over millennia concerning these issues.

In addition to utilizing a lecture based format, there will also be class discussion as we review video documentaries pertinent to course content. We will consider how people use religious beliefs in order to negotiate the five basic steps in the human recognition of death: (i) denial and isolation; (ii) anger; (iii) bargaining; (iv) depression; (v) acceptance. We will then consider how the variety of religious beliefs are incorporated to provide those suffering and sorrowing with courage, hope, and often great assurance.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

To enable students to organize, evaluate, and understand various religious approaches to the reality of physical mortality.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

Students will develop a number of the skills identified in the University of Calgary statement of learning outcomes. These include communication, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, computer literacy, writing competency, information retrieval, and group interaction.

N.B. It is important to note that the attainment of any learning endeavour requires that students regularly attend classes, read the required material, and complete all course work.

SELF DIRECTED STUDY:

Students are encouraged to read web notes and the assigned pages of text before each lecture, and come prepared to ask questions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

May 26	Section Test	30%
June 9	Section Test	30%
Registrar Scheduled	Final Exam	40%

GRADING:

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

A+	100-96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Students should be familiar with the University regulations regarding academic honesty. See the current University Calendar.

GNOSIS:

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor **two weeks** before the scheduled date.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

PLEASE NOTE: SCHEDULE MAY VARY SLIGHTLY DUE TO CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND TIME CONSTRAINTS.

MAY

12

Chapter 1 Religion, death and dying.
Typologies
Various concepts of transcendence.
Documentary

17

Chapter 2 Indigenous beliefs - plus video. (Tribal typology: Australian, N. American, African)

19 Chapter 3	Introduction to eastern ideas The India Tree (Hinduism, Buddhism) Reincarnation and salvation/liberation.
24 Chapter 4	Hinduism, Buddhism continued, Jainism, Sikhism
26	Section Test – worth 30 points Time allowed: 75 minutes. Class resumes at 3:30 p.m. Documentary pertaining to SE Asian Tree
31 Chapter 3 + Webnotes	South East Asian Tree (Chinese and Japanese traditions) Ancestral transcendence, the Dao, karma, reincarnation, the Kami.
JUNE	
2 Chapter 3 + Webnotes	South East Asian Tree (Chinese and Japanese traditions) Ancestral transcendence, the Dao, karma, reincarnation, the Kami.
7	Zoroastrianism
9	Section Test – worth 30 points Time allowed: 75 minutes. Class resumes at 3:30 p.m. Documentary pertaining to the Abrahamics
14	Introduction to the Abrahamics (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) Judaism
16	Christianity
21	Islam
23 Chapter 7 Webnotes	The Near Death Experience Elizabeth Kubler Ross – the Five Stages of Grieving in approaching death. Grieving and mediating grief, growing beyond mortality Documentary.

REGISTRAR-SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM